

Everything Flows

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair and black-rimmed glasses is shown from the chest up. She is wearing a white button-down shirt. Her expression is one of frustration or stress, with her mouth slightly open and her hands pressed against her temples. The background is a vibrant blue with white, chaotic scribbles and arrows, suggesting a complex or overwhelming environment.

Locating Generative AI
and Human Capabilities
as Third Spaces for
Teaching, Learning and
Assessment in Uncertain
Times



Professor Peter Bryant **PFHEA**

Professor of Business Education
Director – Disruptive Innovations in Business
Education
The University of Sydney Business School
Visiting Professor – Kings Business School,
London

A cracked globe of the Earth sits on a sandy beach. A bright, golden light shines through a large opening in the center of the globe, illuminating the interior and casting a reflection on the sand. The background shows a soft, hazy sky and ocean waves.

Do these
crises
EVER
END?

1.

Our new study found AI is wreaking havoc on uni assessments. Here's how we should respond

Sheffield Hallam restricts TPS access to REF academics only

Teaching staff at post-92 institution to be employed by subsidiary firm and lose right to access expensive pensions scheme

London South Bank to create 'two track' academic workforce

Staff to be divided into teaching and research roles, with new starters hired via subsidiary firm

Donald Trump

Trump offers top universities funds if they boost conservative ideas

The Guardian

Proposed Macquarie University restructure will 'hollow out' humanities, academics say

Proposed Macquarie University restructure will 'hollow out' humanities, academics say ... Academics have accused Macquarie University of "...

The Canberra Times

'Psychologically unsafe': ANU work halt ordered over Renew program

Australian National University staff halt work due to hazards resulting in extreme mental health conditions amid claims of aggression and...

2 hours ago

Sky News Australia

Major Aussie uni set to let go of over 200 staff members

One of Australia's largest universities is set to lose a large chunk of its workforce after a string of expressions of interest in voluntary...

Higher education

Kent and Greenwich universities to merge in attempt to improve financial viability



Sean Thomas

Universities are doomed and it's terrible. But there is one silver lining

Artificial intelligence could spell the end of higher education, but we may rather enjoy a world without it



256

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'AI is, in essence, mass-producing intelligence and universities specialise in expensive, artisanal, hand-crafted intelligence. That spells doom for the artisans, the way machine looms spelt doom for artisanal weavers in the early Industrial Revolution.

It spells the end of the university.

We might find, therefore, that we rather enjoy a world without universities. Young people will certainly enjoy a life without massive debt.'

Sean Thomas (2025), The Telegraph

A person in a white shirt is covering their face with their hands, suggesting distress or frustration. The background shows a desk with a laptop, a pen holder, and a bookshelf. A large, bright orange and yellow explosion or fire is visible behind the person, adding to the sense of chaos or conflict.

2.

And now I have
to embrace/
cope with AI in
my assessment
and feedback?

Voice from the past: how one university is countering AI with ancient examination techniques

University dean fears '99.9 per cent' of his students are using AI to write essays

Professor Laurent Muzellec, Dean of Trinity Business School at Trinity College Dublin, said the technology is 'de-skilling' learners

Tech > News Tech

CHAT'S ON Trinity College Dublin chiefs issue AI & Gen AI essay guidelines as 'impossible to ban' tech deemed 'the future'

But anyone seen to be overdoing it might be seen in a poor light

AI in Higher Education: Overcoming Challenges and Building the 'Competent Institution'

'I received a first but it felt tainted and undeserved': inside the university AI cheating crisis

What Generative AI Means for Writing and Learning in Higher Education

THE CONVERSATION
Academic rigour, journalistic fair

Arts + Culture Books + Ideas Business + Economy Education Environment + Energy Health Politics + Society Science + Tech



Why should humanities education persist in an AI age? Self-development, to start
Published: February 4, 2025 5:53am AEDT

University World News 
THE GLOBAL WINDOW ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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GLOBAL
The McDonaldisation of higher education in the age of AI
James Yoonil Auh 11 December 2024

First pro vice-chancellor for artificial intelligence appointed

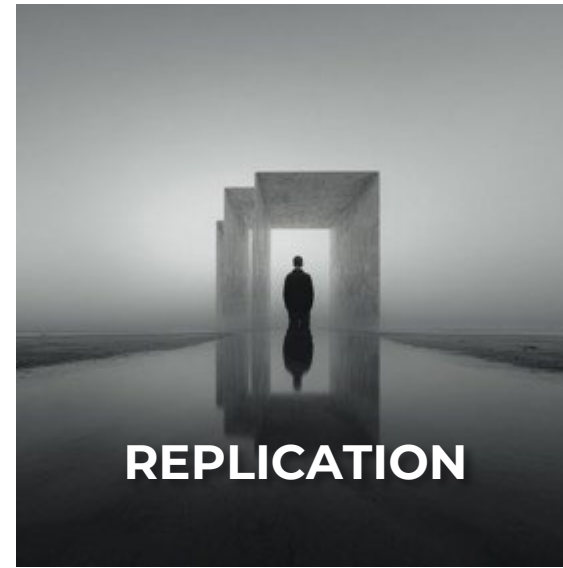
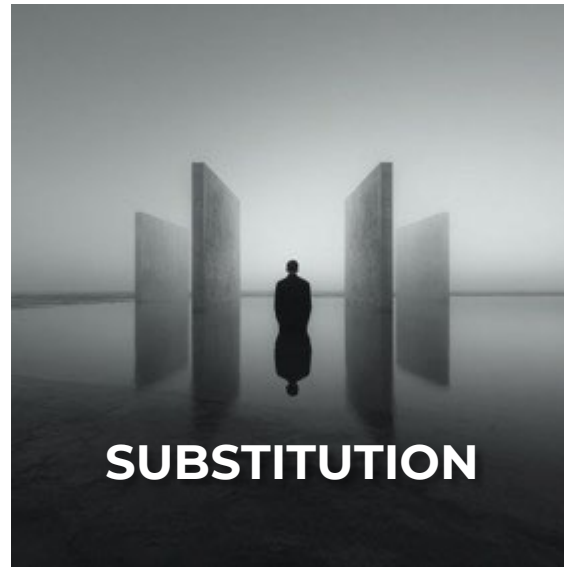
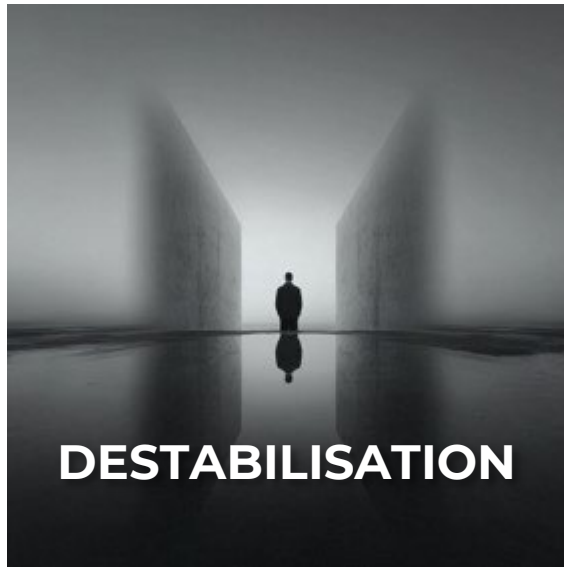
Professor filling first-of-its-kind role says universities need to encourage students to use AI in their studies, or risk them falling behind

November 3, 2024



3.

Everyone says
assessment and
feedback is
broken



AI destabilises core assessment and feedback concepts of authorship, originality and individual cognition,

The boundary between legitimate support and inappropriate substitution has become blurred,

Assessment designs are exposed as fragile, as AI can reproduce outputs without demonstrating understanding, judgement or learning process.

Assessment has shifted from a technical to an ethical and cultural problem, requiring educators to negotiate integrity

Five
years
away





**WILL ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK
BE DIFFERENT in 2030?**

A woman with short brown hair and black-rimmed glasses is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the right. She has her hand resting on her chin in a thoughtful pose. A white thought bubble with the word "YES!" in blue capital letters is positioned to her right. The background is a solid teal color.

YES!

GENERATIONAL CHANGE



Generational boundaries are heuristic tools that mark cognate but not homogeneous shifts in shared experiences, but these transitions are gradual rather than abrupt



GENERATION

ALPHA ARE

COMING



- First generation born entirely in the 21st century
- Social media literacy and strong peer networks seen as future education and employment strengths
- Raised by millennial parents who emphasise voice, validation, safety, and individuality
- Largest generation in history (2 billion)
- Educated in a saturated digital environment with instant access to information from early childhood
- Predicted that 50% will obtain a university degree

EMERGING LEARNING CULTURES OF GENERATION ALPHA

Personalisation and
agency over learning

Information, media
and technological
literacies and uses

Defined constructs of ethics,
values and relationships
(unique to their generation)

Non-linear and on-
demand knowledge
acquisition

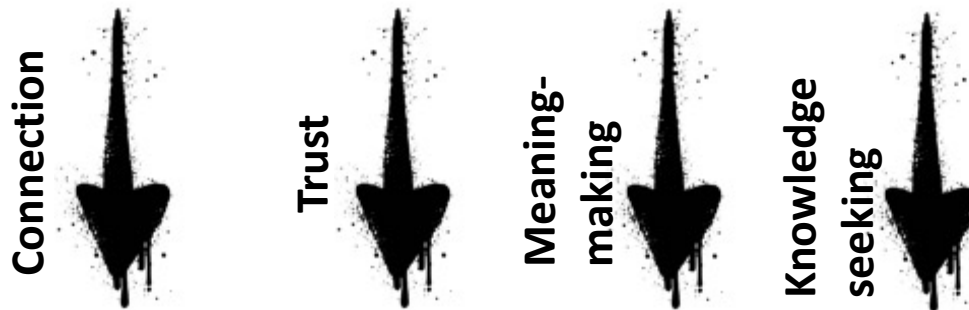
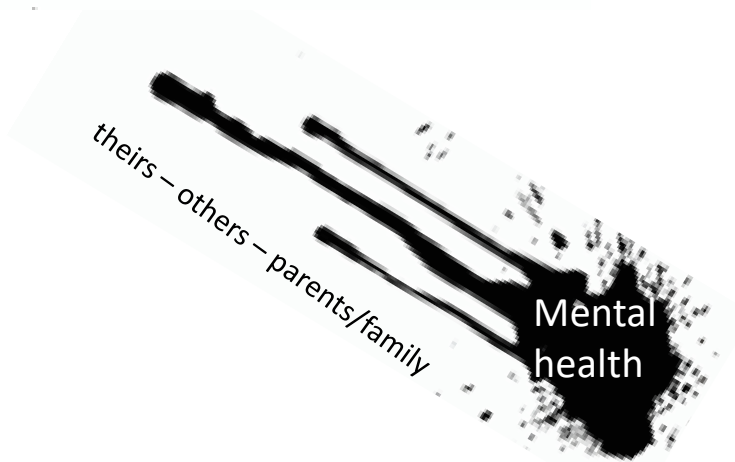
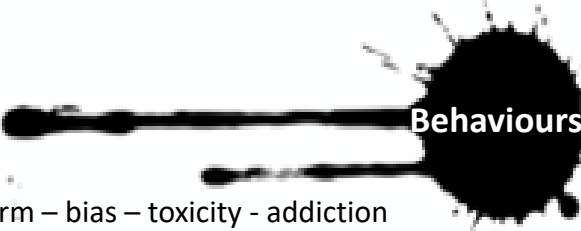
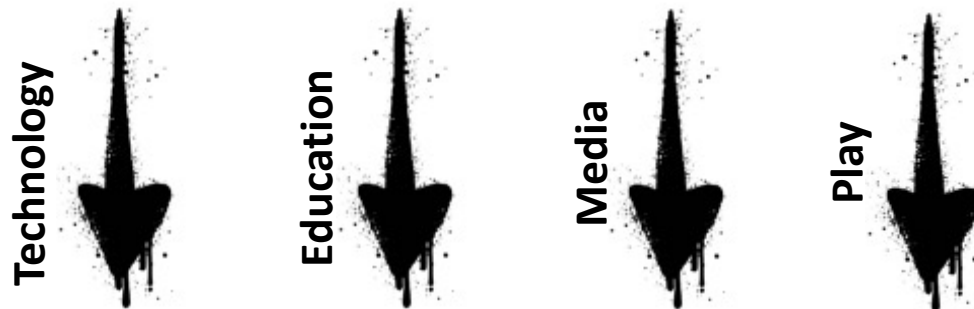
Senses of self

A conceptual image of an office in a state of chaos. Numerous papers are shown in mid-air, as if being blown or falling, creating a sense of disorder and confusion. The background shows a desk with a computer monitor and a bookshelf, but they are out of focus, emphasizing the floating papers. The lighting is a mix of cool blue tones from a window on the left and warm orange tones from the interior lights.

EPISTEMIC MESSINESS

States of being where knowledge, evidence, and meaning-making are unstable, contrary and shaped by overlapping technological, cultural, and institutional forces.

MEDIATING



CATALYSING

INFLUENCING

Parents

Peers

Digital communities

AI agents and bots

DISRUPTING

REIMAGINING FEEDBACK



**in EPISTEMICALLY MESSY
THIRD SPACES**



The human capabilities that we develop and inspire through feedback

A

**CONNECTION
CREATIVITY
CRITICALITY
EMOTION
BELIEF
CURIOSITY
IMAGINATION**





The human
responsibility
to engender
trust through
feedback

B



Trust is the essential social currency of universities, underpinning the authenticity of student work, the credibility of what is taught, and the integrity, usefulness and rigor of academic research; when trust frays, the entire academic project becomes vulnerable.

The Mirror University 8

The background is a vibrant collage of orange, yellow, and red tones. It features several overlapping circular shapes and abstract patterns. In the center, there is a grayscale image of five students walking. Behind them, a grayscale image of a building with a dome is visible. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic.

Rebuilding the University of Trust:
Catalysing living tensions to define the soul of the university

The human contradictions and responses over immediacy, efficiency and purpose



Masters students to be taught with AI in UK, (and possibly world) first

By Tim Winkler || April 22, 2026



The UK's HE regulator has [approved a new provider](#) that will use AI tutors to teach master's degree programs.

[Turnitin](#) has just announced the launch of its groundbreaking "Anti-AI Humanizer" feature on August 27, 2025, taking AI detection to the next level! 🎓

The new "AI Bypasser Detection" tool is designed to identify texts modified by AI "humanizers"—tools used to mask AI-generated content and make it harder to detect.



Danny Liu · 2nd

[Connect](#)

Professor in Educational Technologi...

10h · 🌐

In July the University of Sydney introduced new policies that effectively 'banned the banning of AI' in non-observed assessments, to reduce fear and shame around use of AI and give students more agency. This compels us to shift from a controlling mindset around AI to an educative one. When we told students about this shift, many initial reactions were ones of surprise, followed by a realisation that this was the new reality.



James Hutson, PhD, PhD · 2...

[Connect](#)

Polymath | Top AI and Higher Educa...

14h · Edited · 🌐

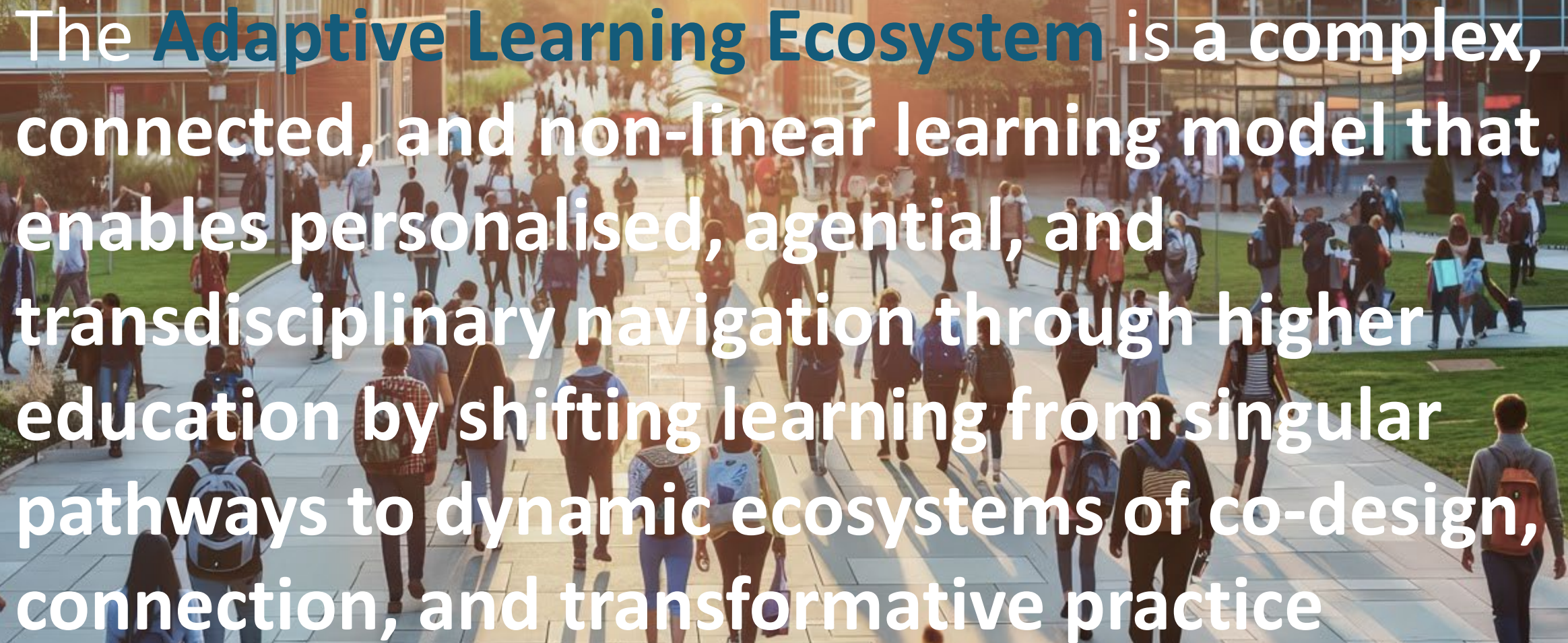
What if the real crisis in higher ed isn't AI, but the inability to confront the reality that college has changed?

[Daniel Plate](#) and I have just published "The Intellectual Bankruptcy of Anti-AI Academic Alarmism: A Rebuttal" in [Teaching in Higher Education](#) : <https://lnkd.in/gzjZRuEP> from our research in [Lindenwood University College of Arts and Humanities](#)



ADAPTIVE LEARNING ECOSYSTEM



A large crowd of students walking on a university campus walkway during sunset. The scene is filled with people carrying backpacks, moving in various directions. The background features modern university buildings with large glass windows and green spaces. The lighting is warm and golden, creating long shadows on the paved path.

The **Adaptive Learning Ecosystem** is a complex, connected, and non-linear learning model that enables personalised, agential, and transdisciplinary navigation through higher education by shifting learning from singular pathways to dynamic ecosystems of co-design, connection, and transformative practice

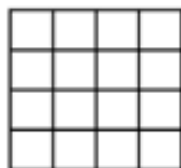
Enabled by critical, interactive and literate applications and integrations of evolving and emerging technology



Information engagement

'the lecture'

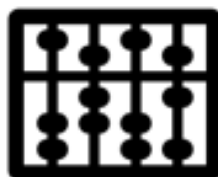
Chunked content and experiences



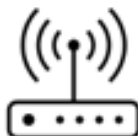
Multiple voices



Non-linear navigation



Storytelling



Resonant learning

Active and connected participation

'the tutorial'

Real world, authentic activity



Transitional spaces



Connected learning



Feedback and forward loops into assessment for learning



reflection

legacy

Authentic assessment and feedback

'the assignment'

Epistemological authenticity



Educational authenticity



Experiential authenticity



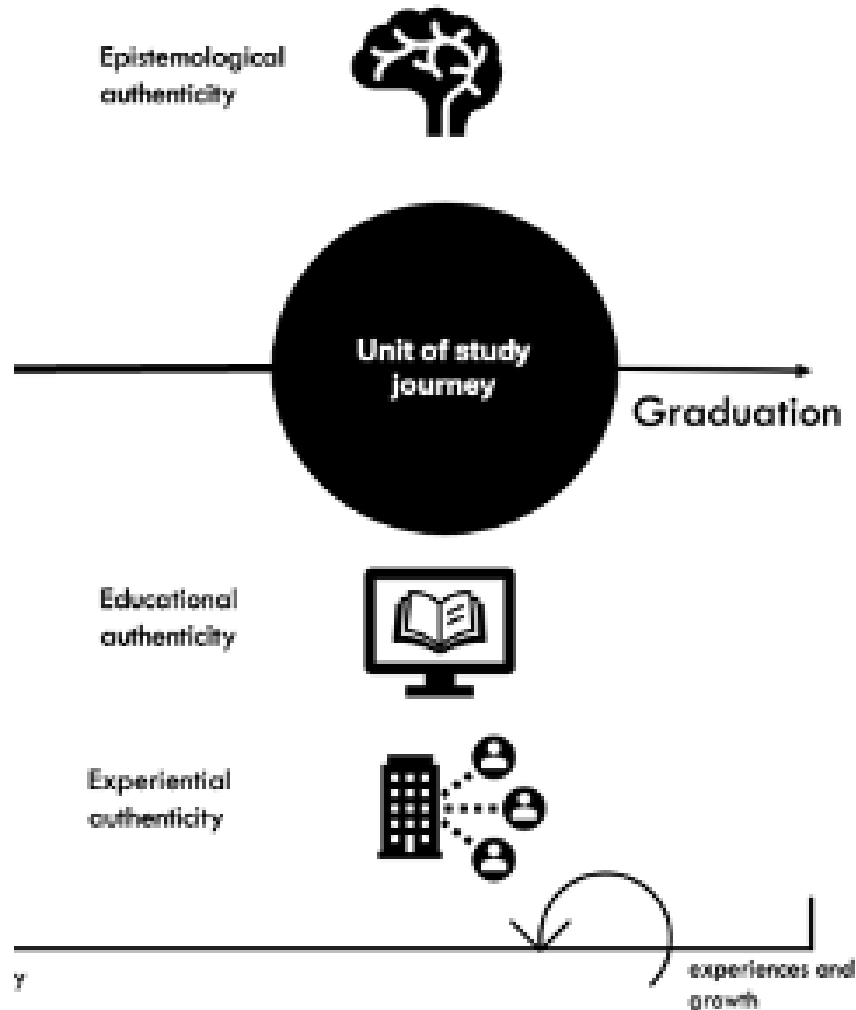
experiences and growth

Unit of study journey

Graduation



**Authentic assessment
and feedback**
'the assignment'



Epistemological authenticity

Authentic to the knowledges, philosophies, aesthetics and ethics of the disciplinary field/s or domain/s (or the spaces in between them).

Educational authenticity

Authentic to the pedagogical intention and approach of the educator and the student (if co-designed).

Experiential authenticity

Authentic to past, present and future experiences of students, within their journeys through work, life and play.

ASCILITE 2025

Future-Focused:

Educating in an Era of Continuous Change

Undergraduate 2030: Reimagining our higher education landscape for the epistemological and technological youthquakes of Generation Alpha

Peter Bryant

The University of Sydney Business School

Generation Alpha, born entirely in the 21st century, is set to transform higher education through their distinct behavioural, epistemological, and technological traits. This paper critically examines how their expectation that are shaped by personalisation, digital immersion, and non-linear knowledge acquisition, challenge traditional undergraduate education models. Drawing on an informed critique literature review, the study explores the implications of Generation Alpha's learning preferences and proposes a future-focused response through higher education learning design. The Adaptive Learning Ecosystem (ALE), developed at the University of Sydney Business School, is introduced as a model for reimagining curriculum, assessment, and student engagement. The model supports personalised, transdisciplinary, and socially connected learning, enabling students to navigate complex educational journeys with agency and purpose. The paper outlines three strategic horizons (program design, lifelong learning, and space spaces for innovation) through which higher education institutions can respond to the educational ambitions of Generation Alpha. We argue for a co-designed, human-centred approach to learning that prepares students not for today's technologies and crises, but for the unknown and *yet to be experienced* challenges of tomorrow. In doing so, universities can remain relevant, resilient, and impactful in an era of continuous change.

Keywords: Generation Alpha, higher education futures, digital pedagogy, curriculum innovation, co-design





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